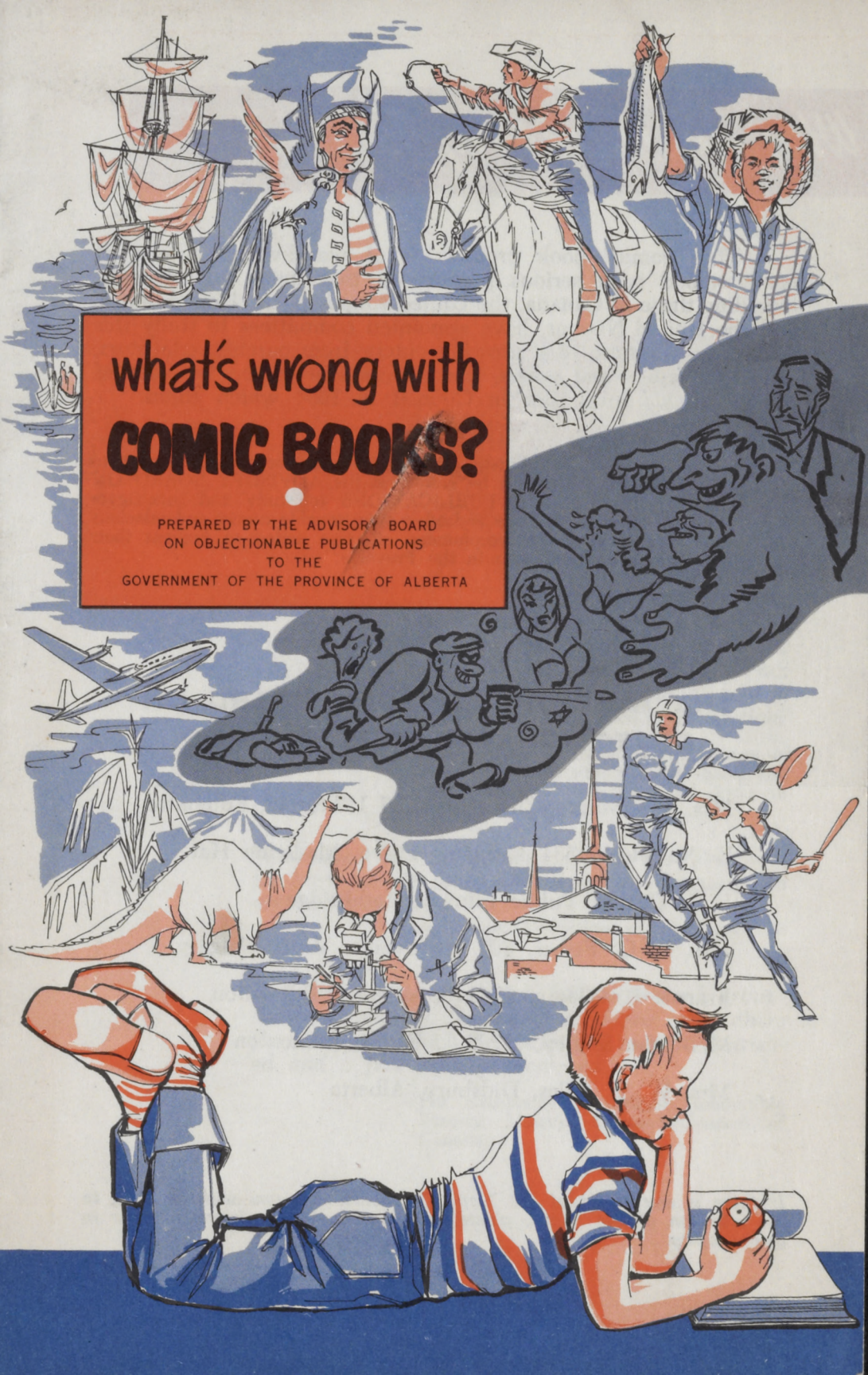


# what's wrong with **COMIC BOOKS?**

PREPARED BY THE ADVISORY BOARD  
ON OBJECTIONABLE PUBLICATIONS  
TO THE  
GOVERNMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA





# *Why an Advisory Board?*

The "comic" book problem is of world-wide concern. It has assumed such serious proportions that many governments, including those of Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the United Nations, have appointed committees to study this matter. In response to a growing outcry from parents, educators, religious leaders and others, the Government of the Province of Alberta issued an Order in Council in 1954 which states

" . . . it is deemed advisable and in the public interest to establish a Board to be known as the ADVISORY BOARD ON OBJECTIONABLE PUBLICATIONS to study and investigate the question of crime and other objectionable comics and salacious magazines and to recommend effective action to prevent their sale and distribution in the Province."

## **THE ALBERTA ADVISORY BOARD ON OBJECTIONABLE PUBLICATIONS**

Mrs. A. J. Maure, Chairman, 9227 117 Street, Edmonton

R. M. Block, 534 Parkview Drive, Medicine Hat

J. E. Dutton, Public Library, Lethbridge

Mrs. L. G. Fisher, 805 1st Avenue West, Calgary

Francis P. O'Hara, 9711 85 Avenue, Edmonton

Mrs. John Srigley, 11208 71 Street, Edmonton

Mrs. W. E. Stiles, Didsbury, Alberta

*If there is any aspect of the "comics" problem that you wish to bring to the attention of the Board, please correspond with the Board member in your vicinity.*



# *Do You Know What Your Child is Reading?*

*If we consider it necessary to safeguard the physical well-being of our children, is it not natural that their minds, which should control their bodies, must be given even greater protection?*

- The Senate of Canada. Proceedings of the Special Committee on Sale and Distribution of Salacious and Indecent Literature. 1952-53.

*Why does our civilization give to the child not its best but its worst, in paper, in language, in art, in ideas?*

- Wertham. *Seduction of the Innocent*. Page 15.

*Today in a mass-produced, mass-organized, group-thinking society, books are above all others the means by which the individual may be nourished and a free society preserved.*

- His Excellency The Right Honourable Vincent Massey, Governor-General of Canada.



# "Comics" are No Laughing Matter!

Busy parents only glance at comics because they have so little time or inclination to study them. The Advisory Board has made a careful and exhaustive study of both "comics" and expert opinion on them. As a result this pamphlet has been compiled by the Advisory Board for the guidance of parents and others concerned. The Board also urges parents to take time to appraise the comics their children read.

The Board's major objections to comics are listed below. Following each objection are selected opinions of recognized authorities.

1

SOME "COMICS" GLORIFY CRIME AND CRIMINALS: THEY ENCOURAGE THE COMMISSION OF CRIME AND CONTEMPT FOR LAWFUL AUTHORITY.

Is the police official often less clever and resourceful than the criminal? Is he often outwitted even though the criminal is ultimately punished? Is the police officer the hero or is the villain really the hero? Whom will the children regard as their hero—the police officer or the villain?



*In my many years of Police experience, I have found no comedy in crime—only tragedy and broken homes. Children should be taught to respect the laws, and the law enforcement agencies, that they may not gain the erroneous impression, as they so often do from crime comics, that it is clever to evade the law and ridicule and hamper the efforts of law enforcement officers.*

—M. F. E. Anthony, Chief Constable, City of Edmonton. Assistant Commissioner, R.C.M. Police (retired) (former Director of Criminal Investigation —R.C.M.P.)



*Crime "comics" are a contributing factor leading to juvenile delinquency.*

— Report of the New York State Joint Legislative Committee to Study the Publication of Comics.

*The availability of salacious literature and presentation of any type which glorify crime make a mockery of democratic living and respect for order.*

— J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the F.B.I., U.S. Government.

## 2

### SOME "COMICS" PRESENT A DISTORTED, UNHEALTHY AND IMMORAL CONCEPT OF SEX AND MARRIAGE.

Will a detrimental impression of sex or marriage remain with your children?



*... if we break down the regard that we have for the sanctity of the human body and the fundamental relations between man and woman, we are destroying our civilization.*

— Charlotte Whitton, Mayor of Ottawa. (The Senate of Canada. Proceedings of the Special Committee on Sale and Distribution of Salacious and Indecent Literature.)

*"A Guide is pure in thought and in mind and in deed." With so much literature denoting thought, speech and action of an impure and immoral nature available, it is very difficult to instill into Guides the proper conception of this law of purity.*

— Mrs. D. E. S. Wishart, Former Chief Commissioner of Canadian Girl Guides. (The Senate of Canada. Proceedings of the Special Committee on Sale and Distribution of Salacious and Indecent Literature.)

*The most subtle and pervading effect of crime comics on children can be summarized in a single phrase: Moral disarmament.*

— Wertham. *Seduction of the Innocent.*



## 3

## SOME "COMICS" FOSTER PREJUDICE AGAINST CLASS, RACE, CREED, AND NATIONALITY.

Is the villain usually a foreigner?  
Is he a person not of the white  
race? Is the villain usually from  
another country? Are pagan beliefs  
being spread?



*"Comics" which depict . . . race hatred impair the ethical development of children.*

-Report of the New York State Joint Legislative Committee to Study the Publication of Comics.

## 4

## SOME "COMICS" PORTRAY VIOLENT DEATH, GROTESQUE, FANTASTIC AND UNNATURAL CREATURES WITH REPULSIVE REALISM.



Do the "comics" your children read promote good mental health? Do they cause tension and fear?

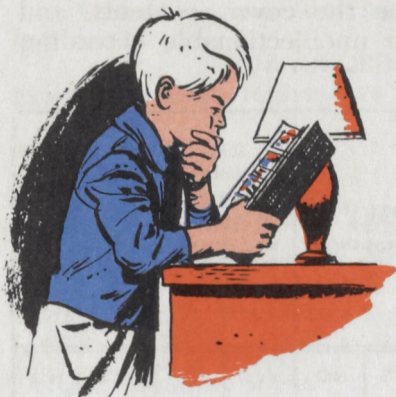
*One wonders what place they [Comics portraying fear and horror] have in the life of a child other than to fill him with unnatural fears and forebodings.*

-Mrs. C. W. Mellish, Children's Reading Committee, The Canadian Home and School and Parent Federation.



## 5

## MOST "COMICS" ARE INARTISTIC.



Is the paper poor, the printing blurred and the colour gaudy or unpleasant?

*Most comics could not be called artistic by any stretch of the imagination. They are cheap tawdry commercial reproductions that haven't anything to do with art. The pictorial content seems to me most damaging to growing children, especially those with sensitive artistic notions.*

— H. G. Clyde, Edmonton, Alberta,  
Head of Department of Fine Arts,  
University of Alberta.

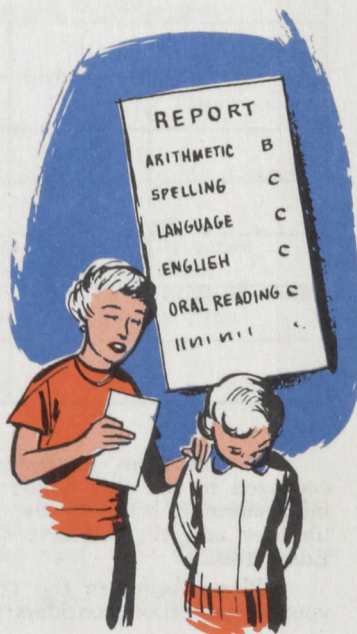
## 6

ALL "COMICS" ARE DETRIMENTAL  
TO GOOD READING SKILLS.

Are lines of type floating in small balloons, training your child to become a slow word-by-word reader? Is the print cramped? Are "comics" enlarging your child's vocabulary? Is there anything "comics" do for your children that a good children's book won't do better?

*No informed thought is given to the fact that far from instilling into children and adolescents a taste for books, the habit of reading "comics" exclusively tends to destroy this taste. That is the most serious aspect of the matter. A people who thrive on comics will never progress beyond the digest stage and a nation of digest readers will never be a cultured nation.*

— The Senate of Canada. Proceedings of the Senate Committee on Sale and Distribution of Salacious and Indecent Literature.





## Rating Scale

How do the “comics” in your home rate by these standards? This rating scale may prove useful when you are appraising the “comics” your children read. Examine the cover, contents, and advertising. Are they objectionable or unobjectionable according to these standards?

[illegible]

Organizations interested in combating objectionable "comics" are encouraged to use this Guide and Rating Scale in their meetings. Additional information is listed in the bibliography and may be obtained from public libraries and the Library, Department of Extension, University of Alberta, Edmonton.

Please bring to the attention of the Advisory Board "comics" which your Organization considers most objectionable.



# Inexpensive Books

Don't leave a vacuum in your child's reading life. Limiting "comics" should not deprive your child of reading material. You can substitute inexpensive good books for bad "comics".

These books are attractive, worthwhile, and cost little more than a few comics.

## FOR OLDER BOYS AND GIRLS

DENT'S CHILDREN'S ILLUSTRATED CLASSICS, Toronto. *McClelland and Stewart*. \$1.50

*Alcott*. Little Women  
*Grimm's*. Fairy Tales  
*Hawthorne*. A Wonder Book  
*MacDonald*. Princess and the Goblin

*Oman*. Robin Hood  
*Stevenson*. Treasure Island  
*Wyss*. Swiss Family Robinson

RAINBOW CLASSICS, Toronto. *McClelland and Stewart*, \$1.59

*Austin*. Pride and Prejudice  
*Carroll*. Alice in Wonderland  
*Collodi*. Pinocchio  
*Dafoe*. Robinson Crusoe  
*Dickens*. Christmas Stories  
*Mulock*. Little Lame Prince

*Ruskin*. King of the Golden River  
*Sewell*. Black Beauty  
*Spyri*. Heidi  
*Stevenson*. Kidnapped  
*Swift*. Gulliver's Travels  
*Twain*. Adventures of Tom Sawyer

THRUSHWOOD BOOKS, Toronto. *McLeod*, \$1.39

*Bennett*. Master Skylark  
*Burnett*. The Secret Garden  
*Harris*. Uncle Remus  
*London*. Call of the Wild  
*London*. White Fang

*Pyle*. Robin Hood  
*Saltin*. Bambi  
*Seaton*. Biography of a Grizzly  
*Tarkington*. Penrod  
*Tarkington*. Penrod and Sam

PENGUIN BOOKS (CANADA) LTD., Montreal. 35c and 50c

*Bentley*. Trent's Last Case  
*Buchan*. The Three Hostages  
*Doyle*. Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes  
*Wodehouse*. Right Ho, Jeeves

*Wodehouse*. Uncle Fred in the Springtime  
*Woodhan-Smith*. Florence Nightingale

PUFFIN STORY BOOKS, Montreal. *Penguin Books (Canada) Ltd.*, 50c and 60c

*Carroll*. Through the Looking Glass  
*Barne*. Elizabeth Fry  
*de la Mare*. Selected Stories and Verse  
*Doorly*. The Radium Woman  
*Garnett*. The Family from One End Street  
*Graham*. The Children Who Lived In a Barn  
*Green*. King Arthur and His Knights of the Round Table

*Lynch*. The Grey Goose of Kilnevin  
*Lynch*. Long Ears  
*McGregor*. The Young Detectives  
*Montgomery*. Carcajou  
*Parton*. Melissa Ann  
*Phillips*. Malay Adventure  
*Streetfield*. Ballet Shoes  
*Tozer*. The Wanderings of Mumfie  
*Twain*. Huckleberry Finn

*Hunt*. Boy of the Indian Frontier

COMPANION LIBRARY, Toronto. *McLeod*, \$1.00

Robin Hood  
*Twain*. Tom Sawyer, Detective and Other Stories

FAMOUS HORSE STORIES, Toronto. *McLeod*, \$1.49

*Balch*. Indian Paint  
*Balch*. Lost Horse  
*Henry*. Justin Morgan Had a Horse  
*Lang*. Strawberry Roan  
*Larom*. Mountain Pony and the Pinto Colt

*Larom*. Mountain Pony and the Rodeo Mystery  
*Montgomery*. The Capture of the Golden Stallion  
*Montgomery*. Midnight



FAMOUS DOG STORIES, Toronto. *McLeod*, \$1.49

*Evans. Derry: Airedale of the Frontier*

*Evans. Derry's Partner*

*Kjelgaard. Big Red*

*Kjelgaard. Irish Red*

*Kjelgaard. Snow Dog*

*Knight. Lassie Come Home*

*Lathrop. Juneau, The Sleigh Dog*

*O'Brien. Return of Silver Chief*

*O'Brien. Silver Chief,*

*Dog of the North*

*O'Brien. Silver Chief to the Rescue*

*O'Brien. Spike of Swift River*

*O'Brien. Valient, Dog of the*

*Timberline*

*Terhune. Buff, A Collie*

YOUNG READERS' BOOKSHELF, Toronto. *McLeod*, \$1.29

Young Readers' Baseball Stories

Young Readers' Indian Stories

Young Readers' Basketball Stories

Young Readers' Pioneer Stories

Young Readers' Football Stories

THRUSHWOOD BOOKS, Toronto. *McLeod*, \$1.49

*Seaton. The Biography of a Grizzly*

*Tarkington. Penrod*

BIG LEAGUE BASEBALL LIBRARY, Toronto. *McLeod*, \$1.49

*DiMaggio. Lucky to be a Yankee*

*Young. Roy Campanella*

FAMOUS SPORTS STORIES, Toronto. *McLeod*, \$1.49

*Emery. High, Inside!*

*McCormick. Flying Tackle*

TRIPLE TITLE SERIES, Toronto. *McLeod*, \$1.49

Cowboys, Cowboys, Cowboys

Pirates, Pirates, Pirates

Fun, Fun, Fun

Space, Space, Space

#### FOR YOUNGER READERS

LITTLE GOLDEN LIBRARY BOOKS, 39c

Animals of Farmer Jones

Brave Cowboy Bill

Christmas in the Country

Gingerbread Man

Golden Goose

Hansel and Gretel

The Musicians of Bremen

Little Red Hen

Little Red Riding Hood

Madeline

Nursery Tales

Puss in Boots

Scuffy, the Tugboat

Singing Games

Thumbelina

Topsy Turvey Circus

Twelve Dancing Princesses

Year in the City

Year on the Farm

*Bannerman. The Story of Little*

*Black Sambo. Clarke Irwin, 75c*

*Brunhoff. Story of Babar.*

*Ambassador, \$1.50*

*Duvoisin. Donkey-Donkey.*

*McLeod, 75c*

*Johnston. Jamie and the Dump*

*Truck. Musson, \$1.35*

*Leskie. Cowboy Small.*

*Oxford, \$1.00*

*Potter. Peter Rabbit.*

*Saunders, \$1.00*

PUFFIN PICTURE BOOKS, Montreal. *Penguin Books (Canada) Ltd.*, 50c and 60c

*Courtney. A Book of Trains*

*Veale and "Wren".*

*Hardy and Megoran.*

*How Planes Fly*

*A Book of Ships*

*White. Sailing Ships*

*Stroud. Airliners*

Additional titles may be obtained from: Children's Books for \$1.25 or Less—  
Association for Childhood Education, 1200 15th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.



# R<sub>x</sub>

FOR "COMICS"

## *Guiding Your Child to Good Reading*

### **TREASURE TO SHARE**

Everyone loves a good story. Reading has been the chief delight of generations of children. If it is losing its appeal for them, may it not be partly because we adults, amid all the distractions of the modern world, have ourselves forgotten the magic to be found in books?

We must enlarge our own knowledge and renew our own sense of wonder in books before we can transmit this enthusiasm to a child. We cannot teach him to value books unless he sees them around the home on shelves and tables, and unless he observes that they are important to us and that we get pleasure from them.

### **READING . . . A FAMILY ADVENTURE**

If parents repeat nursery rhymes to babies, if they share picture books, tell stories and read to older children, they will not only be giving pleasure to the children, but they will be giving them the opportunity to grow unconsciously in imagination and in mental capacity.

It is important that families make time to read together. There are books that appeal to all ages. *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Jungle Books*, *The Wind in the Willows*, *Charlette's Web* and many others have no age limit. Fairy tales and hero stories are as full of wisdom for adults as for children.





There is peace and healing for a child who, at the close of a strenuous day, lies relaxed to listen to one of the world's great stories before he goes to sleep.

Children love to talk about their books. Wise parents will encourage this and will take a real interest in what their children have to say. Here is a key to understanding a child's tastes and interests, and a guide to the choice of other books which follow his interests and widen his tastes.

### **BRINGING CHILDREN AND BOOKS TOGETHER**

Some children have to be introduced to books. A brief glimpse at the plot, a description of an interesting character or place will often serve to get them started. This means some effort on the part of parents, but the results will justify the effort because they will lead the child on to a richer life through books.

If there is a Public Library nearby, parents are welcome to visit its Children's Room and to find out what it offers to their children. The Children's Librarian knows her books and she knows children and understands their interests. She will not underestimate their capabilities and she is interested in widening their knowledge and experience. She will recommend books to them, and she holds Story Hours where books are introduced through the old and charming art of story-telling.

When a child has learned to read, he is naturally eager to practice this new skill. He will read whatever is available. Unfortunately it is often the tawdry and unworthy book that is at hand.





It is important for a child to have his own bookshelf. He should be encouraged to take pride in the possession of good books and to realize that a book is something to treasure.

## HOW TO DISCOVER GOOD CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Children do not demand the latest books. Their favorites have been handed down from hand to eager hand. Parents, aware of the touching brevity of childhood, will want to make sure that no time is wasted on unworthy books. There are wise guides to help in the choice of children's books. Paul Hazard in his books, *Children and Men* discusses their books with wit and sensibility. "To cheat in *quality*, that is what I call oppressing children," he says. Miss Lillian H. Smith, for many years head of work with boys and girls in the Toronto Public Library has written *The Unreluctant Years*, in which she shares with us the knowledge and wisdom acquired in her years of experience in introducing boys and girls to books. Both these books are a delight to read and in them parents will find guidance and inspiration.

Two practical buying guides which may be obtained from a public library or from the Cultural Activities Branch of the Department of Economic Affairs, are *Books for Boys and Girls* edited by Jean Thomson of the Toronto Public Library, and *Junior Bookshelf*\* compiled especially for the children of Alberta by Grace McDonald and Dorothy Rogers, Children's Librarians of the Public Libraries of Edmonton and Calgary.

The best way to help the children in whose development we take such a deep interest, is to share books with them. Good children's books contain the essence of wisdom as distilled and expressed by mature minds. It is a treasure to enjoy and to share with the children of today.

LOUISE RILEY,  
Chairman, Alberta Library Board.

\*May be borrowed from the following:

Public Libraries

University Extension Library

Supervisor of Public Libraries, Cultural Activities Branch, Govt. of Alta.



# For Your Further Information

For more detailed information on "comics" you are referred to the following:

## BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS

*Frank, Josette.* Comics, T.V., Radio, Movies: What Do They Offer Your Children?

Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 148, Public Affairs Committee Inc., 22E 38th Street, New York 16, N.Y.

Report of the New York State Joint Legislative Committee to Study the Publication of Comics. State of New York, Albany, New York, 1954.

*Wertham, F.* Seduction of the Innocent. Clark, Irwin and Co. Ltd., Toronto.

*Witty, P. and Bricker, H.* Your Child and Radio, T.V., Comics and Movies. Science Research Associates.

## PERIODICALS AND PERIODICAL ARTICLES

Books? What About the Comics? The Christian Century, March 30, 1955, page 389.

An Evaluation of Comic Books. Committee on Evaluation of Comic Books, Box 1486, Cincinnati. (Issued at intervals.)

Horror on the Newsstands. Time (September 27, 1954, page 51.)

*Murphy, T. E.* The Face of Violence. (Readers' Digest, November, 1954, page 135 - 137.)

*Murphy, T. E.* For the Kiddies to Read. (Readers' Digest, June, 1954, page 36 - 40.)

*Murrell, J. L.* Are Comics Better or Worse? Annual Rating of Comic Magazines. (Parents' Magazine, August, 1955, pages 48 - 50.)

Acceptable Comics. National Organization for Decent Literature, 33 Congress Parkway, Chicago 5, Ill. (Issued monthly.)

*Wertham, F.* Reading for the Innocent. (Wilson Library Bulletin, April, 1955, pages 610 - 613.)

Talking Shop. (Wilson Library Bulletin, June, 1954, page 884.)

*Witty, P.* Comics, Television and Our Children. (Today's Health, March 30, 1955, page 18 - 21.)



DO NOT FORGET THAT YOUR  
OPINION CARRIES WEIGHT.

Your retailer will feature worthwhile publications if you create the demand.

Do everything in your power to make better use of good reading material obtainable from your Public Library and other sources.



*Additional copies of this Guide  
will be forwarded on request.*

*Prepared by the Advisory Board on Objectionable Publications to the  
Government of the Province of Alberta.*

Published by the Department of Economic Affairs, Cultural Activities Branch,  
Legislative Building, Edmonton.